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By C.S. Bayne

Multiculturalism! in the flickering light of feeble minds
you stand accused of imprisoning lovers in separate rooms
Entombing them in crypts where in the night wailing cries
Through the thick impenetrable walls with Verdi's lyrics
torture souls that love selflessly: denied smell, touch, taste.
They say that you condemned Ophelia to fool-paradise
And tricked Juliet, selling illusions of pardons whose truths
are buried in vengeful pride and urban ghetto feuds.

I have for long days and nights wandered, silent, listening
To the voices of serpents hissing. Their small beady eyes evil
Are fixed. They sliver, drip honey cloaked in free verse spilled
At journalistic love-ins, awaiting the Fall. The hissing paralyses
Fogs the senses of those that stand waiting at the cross-roads
Of the past, present and future; waiting for Eschu, the trickster
With his puzzle-bag, and commands from the mouths of gods.

At the Crossroads, images people dreamscapes where peasants
Kings, Queens, politicians come to see the future. And you
My African Queen, child of the Nile, I am emboldened to stand
In the blinding light of your beauty that challenges Cleopatra's
and Aphrodite's. For this we have suffered so long in our waiting
That even the jealousy of the gods is allayed. I have watched you
become bronze gold, baked in Haitian, Caribbean seas and suns
While in this waste-land I stayed and drank from the gourd
Milk taken from rivers where Ogbuide and her priestesses
Bathe and hold court. I rejoiced and am filled beyond content
At the defining markers on sign-posts in our time-space, telling
"I am a Black woman of Haitian origin". But Eschu warns
Beware of hissing serpents in guise of rainbows. And shadows
that play tricks with banana leaves dancing to shifting lights
at the Carrefour. We are puzzled and come to seek answers.

If not multiculturalism, what shall we conform to in our Kanada?
What shall we become? Thrown together, children of diversity;
Seafarer and cargo wrecked, washed upon these shores
In this diverse land labeled "ours", with many markers.
If stripped of our inner eye, this kaleidoscope, this prism
Multiculturalism becomes a single string of stubborn light
in the disappearing spectrum of truths that trace our search
Through time and drifting continents. We are lost, and adrift
With discarded rituals and myths that yesterday enslaved us
To fragments of the soul trapped in decay and the ruins of cities

Civilizations remembered only on time-yellowed parchments
Sold to the highest bidder: Timbuctu is a dusty memory lost
In trackless time, distant; fragments of Alzheimic instances
Pompeii forgotten, replaced by Hiroshima, Katrina, Psunami.

We come to this place by many roads, each with our stories
To tell in our time. Our acts make us visible. We cannot hide.
We create a world, and in it build spaces to incubate our souls
In this vast universe we chose to be free; but seek love
to transcend life lived without conscience. So each candle
Feeds on fire from the hot fuel of the soul; and adds its flicker
To the brilliance of a flame one billion times greater; signaling
We are present. We want to be seen; to be visible, even a dot
on white canvas. Multiculturalism! candles, millions burning,
drink from the gourd of souls, and wait for signs at the carrefour
and the lights that appear marking our way to Xanadu.

"I am minority, I am visible" marks my entrances, play and exits.

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